

## REMARKS

This Amendment and Response is responsive to the Dec. 28, 2006 Non Final Office Action. In the Office Action: claims 1 and 2 were rejected under §103(a) as being unpatentable over Baxley, et al. (USPN 6,657,975); and claims 3-10, 19, and 20 were rejected under §103(a) as being unpatentable over Baxley, et al., in view of Pester, III (USPN 5,475,732). The Applicant has amended claims 1, 19, and 20.

### Claims 1-10

In claim 1, the applicant recites communications apparatus connectable to a SS7 network for processing voice-to-data signals that includes, among other things, at least one pair of signal transfer points (STP), each of which is connectable to at least one other STP within the public switched telephone network (PSTN) via at least one B-link. SS7 signals are transferred therebetween and the at least one B-link is used in place of a larger number of A-Links. Baxley neither teaches or reasonably suggests such a use of B-links. Nor does Pester teach or reasonably suggest such a use of B-links. This was discussed in a phone conversation with the Examiner on Mar. 28, 2006. Since neither Baxley nor Pester teach or reasonably suggest all of the applicant's claim elements, claim 1 is novel and nonobvious in view of the cited references. The applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of claim 1.

Claims 2 through 10 depend from claim 1 and inherit all of the novel and nonobvious features of the independent claim. For at least these reasons, claims 2 through 10 are also novel and nonobvious. The applicant, therefore, respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of claims 2 through 10.

### Claims 19 and 20

Claims 19 and 20 have been amended in a manner identical to claim 1 to include the same B-link features. The arguments that applied to claim 1 apply herein as well. The applicant, therefore,

respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of claims 19 and 20.

CONCLUSION

Based upon the foregoing, the Applicant believes that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and such disposition is respectfully requested. In the event that a telephone conversation would further prosecution and/or expedite allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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